

# GOODFELLAS WOOD OVEN PIZZA

Why fly to Italy when you can drive to Streetsville?

Words by Leo Graziani



Walking into Goodfellas, at the corner of Queen and Main in Streetsville, produces an odd sensation—you don't quite feel like you're in Mississauga anymore, but rather in Italy or New York. Inside, the smiling wait staff, rustic décor, big band music and authentic food all add up to an unforgettable casual fine dining experience in a 90-seat, 3,000-square-foot space.

Co-owners Rocco Giovannelli and Rick Taddeo have been in the pizza business for 15 years, working with Gino's Pizza and 241 Pizza, but wanted to develop something better. "That market was saturated; they're all fighting for the same dollar," says Taddeo. "We wanted to shift into the gourmet market."

Their head chef, Antonio Ferone Danieli, is from Naples, Italy, and he's a certified Neapolitan *pizzaiolo*, holding a diploma from the Scuola Nazionale di Pizza. This means that the ingredients and cooking methods used at Goodfellas match the Italian standards. Many of their ingredients are locally sourced, but many are also imported from Italy—in fact, for authenticity's sake, they *have* to be. Goodfellas also uses D.O.P. products, a designation (verified by the Italian government) that guarantees the quality of the ingredients. And of course, everything is made from scratch; even their pasta.

"Many people say they have gourmet pizza," says Taddeo, "but the real gourmet style is this: a thin crust, with *mozzarella di bufala* and San Marzano tomatoes, baked in a wood-burning oven. We'll put our pizza up against anybody."

The restaurant is lively and energetic. "It's a reflection of the southern spirit—we're passionate people," says Taddeo.

"Sometimes, when certain songs come on, we'll all sing together," says Giovannelli, humming a bit of "Eh, Cumpari." "Customers watch, or join in, and everyone's laughing—it's a good time. I think customers like that loose, free mentality."

But it's not just about serving great food; it's also about improving the community's experience.

"One thing I hear often is, 'Hey, I don't have to go to downtown Toronto anymore!'" says Giovannelli. "Streetsville's renovation plans will turn the town square into a *piazza*, with cobblestones, trees, benches, tables, and a stage for live music. We're perfectly positioned to add to that concept."

"What better restaurant to have in a *piazza* than an authentic Italian restaurant?" adds Taddeo.

"The square will attract people," continues Giovannelli, "but we will also drive people to the square. That's not only good for the town, but it's good for the other local businesses. The people who come to our restaurant don't just eat and leave—they'll walk around afterwards, go for an ice cream and visit other stores."

"I think that's why the City has been behind us, because by supporting us, they know the effect will ripple and the whole community will benefit," says Taddeo.

"It changes from simply 'Goodfellas is a great restaurant,' to 'Streetsville is a great place to dine,'" adds Giovannelli. "I don't expect a customer to always come here, and I'm happy to see that our customers do visit other places."

What's next for Goodfellas? Expansion. Giovannelli and Taddeo are looking at markets in Oakville, Burlington and Milton, as well as a second Mississauga location in Port Credit. "With our Streetsville location, we were developing it as we went; it was all inspiration, our vision," says Taddeo. "When we grow, we have a blueprint to work from—and it will be a lot faster to put up a new place with the same concept. I can't wait!"

With authentic Italian cuisine like this, neither can food lovers in Mississauga.

## Goodfellas Wood Oven Pizza

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